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## **Acculturative Strategies and the Outcomes of Self-Esteem and Well-Being of Latino Immigrants to Boston**

Acculturation is the negotiation process that immigrants undergo as they struggle to adapt to their new culture. Four acculturative strategies are thought to exist that immigrants can choose, and, although the selection of an acculturative strategy is influenced by the sociocultural context, the adoptions of different strategies have been associated with specific psychological outcomes (Berry, 1997, 2005; Neto, 2002; Sam, 2000). Past acculturative research has largely focused on areas outside of the United States; the current project is designed to fill a gap in the psychological literature by exploring Boston, Massachusetts, a city which has experienced a tremendous increase of Latino immigrants over the past decade.

Since 1965, Latino immigrants to the United States have steadily increased in number. Forty million individuals from the Spanish-speaking regions of Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and Spain now account for the second-largest ethnic minority group in the U.S. (Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002). Latinos have immigrated for a myriad of reasons: political asylum, greater economic opportunities, and increased quality of life. All have faced the same challenges: language barriers, culture conflicts, isolation from familiar social supports and networks, employment issues, and discrimination. Psychological theory indicates that immigrants undergo a systematic process of adaptation as they address these challenges, and that the adaptive choices they make will likely impact their overall health, well-being, and success (Berry, 1997).

Although researchers have explored the acculturative process undergone by Latino immigrants to the United States, the majority of this research has focused on Mexican populations living within the Southwestern region of the country. In order to expand our understanding of acculturation and adaptation among Latino immigrants to the U.S., the current project focuses on Central and South American immigrants to the New England area of the country.

### **Acculturative Theory**

The developmental process that immigrants undergo as they mutually accommodate and adapt to the new cultural setting has become known as acculturation (Berry, 1997; Oppedal, Roysamb, & Sam, 2004). Contemporary acculturative research has challenged previously held assumptions that acculturation is equivalent

to assimilation by outlining the complex progression of culture learning and culture shedding that immigrants undergo as they adapt to living in a new environment (Berry, 2005). For instance, the most prominent acculturative researcher, John Berry, has proposed that immigrants have to resolve two primary issues after relocation, including the degree to which they want to maintain ties with their culture of origin and the level of participation in the host society. Berry (1997) proposes four different acculturative strategies that can be derived from these two issues, related to the context of the host society: Integration, where individuals maintain ties with their culture of origin and participate in their new culture; Separation, where individuals maintain ties with their host culture and do not enter into their new society; Assimilation, where individuals do not maintain ties with their culture of origin, but seek close ties with the host culture; and Marginalization, where individuals demonstrate little interest in cultural maintenance, and little interest in having relations with the host society (Berry, 1997).

### **Acculturation and Important Life Outcomes**

Because the process of immigration involves major life changes, immigrants have been referred as a high-risk group for psychological problems and stresses (Ataca & Berry, 2002). The psychological adaptations that occur during acculturation involve the elements of coping and stress, and influence the levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction within the new cultural setting (Ataca & Berry, 2002). Post-migration stressors include perceived discrimination, sociocultural marginalization, insufficient proficiency of the host country's language, and questioning of values, among other factors, and all have a strong negative effect on psychological health (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Oppedal et al., 2004; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2002).

In addition to providing an acculturative framework, Berry (1997) links each acculturative strategy with different psychological outcomes. Specifically, he proposes that Integration is likely

to be the most successful, and Marginalization the least. This assertion has found some empirical support among immigrants to California and the nations of France and Norway (Neto, 2002; Sam, 2000). In the process of Integration, as described above, immigrants are willing to interact and mutually accommodate with the host society, resulting in a connection with the larger society that would provide them with two social support systems as well as limited prejudice and discrimination, factors that would have a positive effect on the well-being of individuals (Berry, 1997).

Previous research supports Berry's assertion that Integration, a combination of a strong national and ethnic identity, is most adaptive for immigrants, and has generated the highest levels of well-being and most positive psychological adaptations for immigrants (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Successful acculturative strategy has also been linked with overall levels of resilience and self-worth, which are negatively correlated with depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Rosenberg, 1965; Sam, 2000). In conceptualizing self-esteem, the fundamental concept of psychological functioning, whereas global self-esteem measures an individual's feelings of self-worth, collective self-esteem relates to an appraisal of the value or worthiness of such racial groups that one is a member (Crocker & Major, 1989). Surprisingly, little research has explained acculturation and well-being among Latino immigrants, although, if based on the acculturative model, it should reflect similar findings with regards to levels of well-being and self-esteem. Overall, it is essential to investigate the relationship between social adaptation and psychological adjustment among foreigners within America, specifically both levels of well-being and self-esteem, as these factors have been shown to mediate the relationship between acculturation and mental health, a mechanism for successfully coping with life events and avoiding problematic behavior (Dinh, Roosa, Tein, & Lopez, 2002; Neto, 2002).

## **Contextual Forces**

Successfully negotiating with the stressors and demands of the new culture through integration can provide a positive outcome for an immigrant's satisfaction of life and well-being. This relationship, however, seems to be influenced by context, and can fluctuate based on the context of resettlement. Adaptation to a new context is overall greatly relative, as attitudes of both the immigrant group and of the host society towards the former are largely interdependent and influence the type of acculturative strategy (Navas et al., 2005). The pre-conditions of a context that will greatly influence a positive acculturation experience include "the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity...low levels of prejudice, positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups, and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups" (Berry, 1997, p. 11). For example, some societies encourage and respect diversity and the maintenance of immigrant culture more than others; their legal policies and ideologies may also reflect a greater acceptance of foreigners and tolerance for integration (Phinney et al., 2001). On the other hand, other nations may exhibit less acceptance, and even discrimination, towards immigrants, pushing them to assimilate into mainstream society and disregard their own cultures (Berry, 1997).

Overall, U.S. social policies have supported the development of Integration; although Hispanic immigrants regard America as their new home, they also "intend to maintain ties to their homeland through periodic visits" (Montero-Sieburth & LaCelle-Peterson, 1991, p. 314). Governmental acts have increased the flow of Latino immigrants to the numbers they are today, as well as bolstered their cultural transition and societal incorporation in America. Even today within the United States, as the "Hispanic culture is being continuously reinforced by the constant flow of new arrivals who bring with them the Spanish language and an adherence to the Hispanic culture," the extent of multiethnicity within certain areas is

noticeable (Smart & Smart, 1995, p. 393).

Although previous research indicates the dominance of Integration among Latino immigrants to the United States, this research has primarily focused on areas of historical Hispanic immigration, such as Mexicans in California and the southern regions of the United States. Contemporary research has suggested that for immigrants, their preference for one acculturative strategy over another greatly depends on the conditions and characteristics of the host society (Berry, 1997). To further the study of the field, it is imperative to investigate this framework in other geographic areas of the United States such as the city of Boston, Massachusetts, a city which has experienced a tremendous increase of Latino immigrants over the past decade. Latinos in this area may have migrated for a variety of different reasons, and under different nationalities and cultural norms; however, they have experienced the process of acculturation like any other immigrant.

## **The Current Project**

As outlined above, national policies exert an influence on the acculturative strategy; equally important, however, are local factors, including the concentration of a particular group and local policies or discriminatory attitudes in a specific setting (Phinney et al., 2001). Thus, even though U.S. national policy may favor the development of Integration, the nation varies regionally with respect to other important characteristics, such as diversity and social attitudes towards immigration. As a result, the dominant acculturative strategy may differ across regions of the United States. In the study of acculturation, it is therefore essential to investigate the context of resettlement, as it likely provides greater insight to trends of acculturative choice. It is also important to conceptualize acculturative strategies because of the psychological outcomes that result.

The context of Boston, Massachusetts is distinct from other areas of the United States for several reasons. Unlike the more historically diverse areas such as regions of the Southwest,



immigration to Boston is a more recent trend. Historically, Boston was a White city, where immigrants for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were primarily of Irish, English, and Italian descent. During the 1970's, the immigrant population solely comprised of 18% of the city. During this time, religious and ethnic tensions ran among these groups toward new immigrant groups, reflecting a characteristic of the environment today, an unwelcoming towards newcomers (Louie, 2005). During the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much like the rest of the nation, the city of Boston faced a demographic shift of non-White immigrants, primarily individuals from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Throughout the last couple of decades, the numbers of foreigners shifted the minority population from 18% to 40% of the city in 1990; today, the majority of inhabitants are minorities, and Latinos comprise the largest percentage. U.S. Census figures suggest that the 37.3% increase of the Latino population within Boston accounts for the growth of 61,955 individuals in 1990 to 85,089 in 2000 (Diaz, 2005). These demographic changes transformed Boston into a "multiethnic metropolis" (Louie, 2005, p. 5), much like other cities in Texas, California, Illinois, and Ohio, and have led to a greater racial mixing.

Although Boston has experienced significant growth in diversity with the increasing numbers of Latinos over the past several decades, shifting the city into a heterogeneous community, traditional attitudes of racial inequality and coldness towards newcomers remain among locals (Hayward & DuPuy, 2006). Certain states that have grown in diversity such as Massachusetts have installed services for immigrants in the spheres of public and mental health, child welfare, and social services, which have assisted their integration; however, these have caused tension among the local Massachusetts citizens who are also in need of their services (Padilla, 1997). These tensions, along with an unwelcoming towards immigrants, have led Boston to be a "deeply segregated" city today, as one study explains that the racial

climate has caused discrimination against Latinos within the labor market, housing, and education systems, resulting in their confinement to surrounding "neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and severe social and economic distress" (Louie, 2005, p. 1).

Difficulty with the English language remains the primary barrier to Integration among Latino immigrants in Boston, where according to the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians, one fourth of all Spanish speakers do not speak English well (BRA, 2005). Individuals who lack solid English speaking skills are significantly less likely to be hired in high-end businesses or industries. Occupations which require less English fluency are twice as likely to be held by Latinos as the general population, which include transportation, production, and material moving occupations. In general, language barriers have caused Latinos to be greatly under-represented in technical and professional jobs, and therefore over-represented in lower-paying service positions (McArdle, 2004). Another contribution to the growing unemployment rate can be attributed to the discrimination that Latino immigrants face in the working world. A recent study revealed that 15% of Latino inhabitants reported they were denied a job, while one in six (17%) stated they were discriminated against at work due to their race or ethnicity (McArdle, 2004). Although Latino immigrants in Boston make up a significant percentage of the total inhabitants of Boston, they face many obstacles in obtaining employment, especially in earning a livable income, and participating in higher-growing and higher-skilled industries.

Overall, the language and employment problems among Latino immigrants have led to a continuous cycle of inequity among the inhabitants of Boston. In fact, a recent report suggests that within the state of Massachusetts, 30% of Latino families are living in poverty compared to 9% for the state overall (Hayward & DuPuy, 2006). As their population continues to grow, problems such as a lack of social support and social networks, language barriers, discrimination, and

poverty are even harder to defeat. Perhaps the discrimination due to language barriers and occasional racism that Latinos face in the new environment of Boston would influence Separation or Marginalization rather than Integration, a situation much different from the rest of the United States. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand the specific acculturation strategies of these immigrants within the city.

Within the literature on acculturation, little research has focused on the most adaptive strategies among Latino immigrants to the United States, especially in regions other than the South and Southwest. Given the ways in which past research has emphasized the importance of considering social context when making assertions about the most adaptive acculturative strategy, it is unclear whether the strategy that works within other contexts (Integration) will be the most adaptive for Latino immigrants to the Boston area. As recent political and social events surrounding national immigration policies seem to indicate that the number of Latino immigrants coming to America will continue to grow, understanding the ways in which to facilitate adaptation will become increasingly important. The current project is designed to fill a gap in the psychological literature regarding the acculturative experience of immigrants to the United States by exploring Boston, Massachusetts. The research will determine the dominant acculturative strategy among Latino immigrants within the city. Given the lack of past research focusing on the target population within this location, no specific hypothesis has been made. The study will also examine the relationship between acculturative strategy and both psychological well-being and levels of self-esteem. As Berry (1997) suggests, the process of acculturation and the outcomes that follow can only be pursued by immigrants within multicultural societies. Although there has been a lack of previous research focused in Boston, the city currently contains the pre-conditions for a pluralistic setting, as displayed with the growing numbers of Latino immigrants.

Because Berry's model performs under a similar pluralistic environment, the current study mirrors Berry's hypothesis that the different acculturative strategies of Latinos will correlate with respective levels of psychological well-being and self-esteem. Although Berry's model also reflects that Integrated Latino individuals will display higher outcomes of well-being and self-esteem levels than those who are Marginalized, with Assimilated and Separated in between, past research has focused solely on environments that welcome this strategy. Because the context of Boston differs from the locations of past research, including the inhabitants' attitudes towards diversity and non-white newcomers, legal and governmental policies, and tolerance for biculturalism, among other factors, no specific hypothesis has been made regarding the most adaptive acculturative strategy within the context of Boston.

## Method

### Participants

Participants for this study were 31 Latino immigrants from Central and South America and the Caribbean living in the neighborhoods of Boston, including Allston, Brighton, and East Boston. Participants were recruited through volunteer programs in East Boston (the East Boston Ecumenical Community Council, or EBECC) and Brighton (the Community Development Corporation, or the Allston/Brighton CDC), Massachusetts, situated in the western section of the city of Boston.

The majority of participants were female (66.7%;  $n = 21$ ), while there were 10 (32.3%) male participants. The average participant age was 39.8 years old ( $SD = 2.57$ ). The majority, or 48.4%, of individuals were married ( $n = 15$ ), 32.3% ( $n = 10$ ) were single, 12.9% ( $n = 4$ ) were separated, one participant was divorced (3.2%), and one participant was widowed (3.2%). Twenty-nine percent of participants had some college education ( $n = 9$ ), 19.4% ( $n = 6$ ) had either a Bachelor's Degree or Junior high education or less, and 9.7% ( $n = 3$ ) had

completed High School. Two participants (6.5%) had either a Ph.D./M.D., an Associates or Technical degree, or some High School, and one participant (3.2%) had some graduate school.

Participation involved the completion of a 20-minute survey which was back-translated in the Spanish language. Ten participants were unfamiliar with the measure of Acculturation, and therefore did not complete this section. The survey methodology in general was perhaps problematic for the population surveyed, as there were cultural barriers to this form of assessment. The directions for this measure in particular may have been difficult to understand for some individuals, as many ranked either their connection with the host culture or their involvement with their own culture, but not both. The final group of participants whose data were included in the current study did not differ significantly from the original set of participants with regards to demographic variables.

The analysis of the current study includes the data of 21 participants; 66.7% female ( $n = 14$ ) and 7 male (33.3%). The average participant age within the final data set was 41.8 years old ( $SD = 2.94$ ). Nine participants (42.9%) were married, 38.1% ( $n = 8$ ) were single, 14.3% ( $n = 3$ ) were separated, and one participant was widowed (4.8%). Seven participants had some college education (33.3%), 19% ( $n = 4$ ) had a Bachelor's degree, 14.3% ( $n = 3$ ) had Junior high or less education, 2 individuals (9.5%) had either completed High School or had a Ph.D./M.D, and one participant had either some high school, Associates or Technical Degree, or some graduate school. Following the completion of the survey, all participants were compensated \$5 for their involvement with cash, food, or in a donation to their organization. All data for this study was collected throughout the Fall of 2006.

## Procedure

After signing a consent form and being notified of compensation, participants were asked to complete a survey which assessed their acculturative strategies and levels of well-being and self-esteem. The first section of the

questionnaire asked demographic information including the individual's age, sex, racial identification, the nation where they have lived for most of their life, their marital status, job, level of education, and for the ages and relations of individuals living with them. Section two included various measures that evaluated the acculturative strategies, well-being, and self-esteem (both collective and global) levels of participants. For those participants who did not consent to be compensated, a donation was made to the organization from which they represented. Other participants were compensated with food, which was given after they had completed the survey.

## Measures

*Acculturation Index.* The Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) scale was used to measure participants' acculturative strategies. Participants ranked their experiences of daily life in relation to other Latinos and Americans through a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all similar* (1) to *very similar* (7). Sample items involved lifestyles such as food, religious beliefs, language, and employment activities. The scale yielded two scores for participants: one of Latino (Co-National Acculturation) and one of American (Host-National Acculturation). Higher scores on the Latino scale signified a greater closeness to Latinos, whereas higher scores on the American scale indicated a greater relation to Americans. This test has shown high internal consistency scores for Co-National Acculturation ( $\alpha = .98$ ) and Host-National Acculturation ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

*The Profile of Mood States.* This measure was used to assess participants' well-being. A 4-point Likert Scale was used, ranging from either *not at all* (1) to *extremely* (4). Participants were asked to choose within a list of moods that best describes how they have been feeling with regards to their level of depression and vigor over the past week, including today. Such feelings included "Lively, Lonely, Alert", among 23 items. Higher scores for vigor indicated higher levels of well-being, whereas greater marks for depression suggested lower levels of



well-being for participants. High internal consistency scores are shown for both depression ( $\alpha = .84$ ) and vigor ( $\alpha = .84$ ) scales.

*Satisfaction with Life.* The Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) scale was also used to evaluate participants' level of well-being.

Responding to a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7), participants rated their levels of well-being by replying to 5 statements such as "In most ways my life is close to my ideal" and "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life". For analysis, higher scores of well-being indicated greater levels of well-being. This scale displayed an internal consistency alpha score of .84.

*PANAS.* The Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) scale was used as a companion to the Satisfaction with Life Scale. This measure uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *very slightly/not at all* (1) to *extremely* (5) to assess subjects' level of subjective well-being. Participants responded to the question of how they have been during the past week, including today, with regards to 20 items such as strength, nervousness, and activeness. Higher scores of positive affect and lower scores of negative affect indicated higher levels of subjective well-being. Both the Positive Affect ( $\alpha = .94$ ) and Negative Affect ( $\alpha = .71$ ) scales showed high internal consistency.

*Collective Self-Esteem.* The Luhtanen & Crocker (1992) Collective Self-Esteem scale was used in assessment. The measure included a 16 item, 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7), and involved questions regarding the individual's feelings about their group membership and own identity. Statements included "I am a worthy member of the social groups I belong to", "I feel good about the social groups I belong to", and "The social groups I belong to are unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am" (reverse-scored). Participant's overall scores were then averaged to determine their rank of collective self-esteem, where higher scores indicated greater levels of collective self-esteem. The overall scale of collective self esteem showed an internal

consistency alpha score of .82.

*Global Self-Esteem.* The Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure participants' self esteem levels. Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from either *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5), participants rated their self esteem levels by responding to 10 statements such as, "On the whole I am satisfied with myself" and "At times, I think that I am no good at all" (reverse-scored). Participants' overall self-esteem scores were then averaged to determine their overall level of self-esteem, where higher scores of global self-esteem suggested greater levels of global self-esteem. The global self-esteem scale revealed high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

## Results

A multidimensional analysis was used to determine the dominant acculturative strategy among participants. Based on the responses to the acculturation index, participants were divided into two subgroups by their level of closeness to Latinos and level of closeness to Americans. Within these two subgroups, a median split divided participants on both their Latino (High or Low) and American scores (High or Low). This rank placed subjects into 4 groups of acculturation: High relations with Latinos and High relations with Americans classified Integration, High connection with Latinos and Low connection with Americans indicated Separation, Low connection with Latinos and High connection with Americans classified Assimilation, and Low relations with Latinos and Low relations to Americans indicated Marginalization. Co-national and host-national means and standard deviations for each acculturative strategy are found in Table 1.

*What is the dominant acculturative strategy among Latino immigrants within the city of Boston?*

Within the literature on acculturation, little research has focused on the most popular levels of adaptation among Latino immigrants to the

United States, especially in regions other than the South and Southwest. The current study investigated the dominant acculturative strategy among Latino immigrants within the city of Boston. Frequency analyses determined the most common acculturative strategy among participants as Assimilated ( $n = 8$ ), or 38.1% of participants. Separated individuals followed closely with 33.3% ( $n = 7$ ), with Integrated and Marginalized tied with the least frequencies, each having 14.3% of the participants ( $n = 3$ ).

*Is there a relationship between acculturative strategy, psychological well-being, and self-esteem?*

Acculturative researcher John Berry (1997) suggests that the process of acculturation and the outcomes that follow can only be undertaken by immigrants within multicultural societies. Although there has been a lack of previous research focused in Boston, the city currently contains the pre-conditions for a pluralistic setting, as displayed with the growing numbers of Latino immigrants. As Berry's model performs under a similar heterogeneous environment as Boston, the current study investigated the correlation between level of adaptation, psychological well-being, and self-esteem.

The relationship between acculturative strategy and psychological well-being and self-esteem (both global and collective) was explored using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Group differences in scores of well-being (Vigor, Depression, Positive Affect, Negative Affect, and Satisfaction with Life), and self-esteem (Global and Collective) were analyzed. The four strategy groups were treated as independent variables. ANOVA analyses indicate significant differences between the levels of Acculturation with regards to levels of Depression, Vigor, Positive Affect, and Satisfaction with Life (See Table 2). Post hoc analyses indicated significant differences between Integration and Marginalization with regards to Vigor ( $M_{\text{Integration}} = 2.41$ ,  $M_{\text{Marginalization}} = 3.87$ ), Positive Affect ( $M_{\text{Integration}} = 2.16$ ,  $M_{\text{Marginalization}} = 4.43$ ) and Satisfaction with life

( $M_{\text{Integration}} = 2.60$ ,  $M_{\text{Marginalization}} = 6.40$ ). Significant differences were also shown between Integration and Separation, with regards to levels of Vigor ( $M_{\text{Integration}} = 2.16$ ,  $M_{\text{Separation}} = 3.66$ ) and Satisfaction with life ( $M_{\text{Integration}} = 2.60$ ,  $M_{\text{Separation}} = 5.73$ ). It is important to note that, contrary to Berry's hypothesis, Integration underperformed compared to Marginalization and Separation across several measures of well-being within the context of Boston. This important finding will be further discussed.

## Discussion

The present study explored the patterns of acculturation, as modeled after Berry (1997), among Latino immigrants in Boston, as well as examined the correlation between acculturative strategies and levels of psychological well-being and self-esteem. The findings support Assimilation, or learning of the American culture and shedding cultural ties, as being the acculturative strategy of choice among Latino immigrants within the city of Boston. According to the acculturative framework, the majority of participants sought to immerse themselves and interact with the host culture rather than maintain their Latino cultural identity. This method of adaptation within this city differs from other areas of the United States such as the Southwestern states, where Integration is the most common acculturative strategy adopted by Latino immigrants (Berry, 2005).

The adoption of Assimilation among Latino immigrants may be an artifact of the context of Boston. As all newcomers in a society live and behave in ways that correspond to their surroundings and expectations, Latinos in Boston feel most welcome to Assimilate, rather than Integrate. According to Berry (1997), Integration is "freely" chosen and effectively utilized by immigrant groups when the host society is welcoming towards cultural variety. As the majority of participants in the current study did not choose the Integration acculturative strategy, the findings are indicative of the atmosphere of the city: one that is not very inclusive to cultural



variety, nor holds a multicultural ideology. Newcomers may have felt constrained in their choice for Assimilation in order to avoid stress that may have occurred as a result of conflict between their personal preferences (Co-national) and contextual policies (Host-national) towards immigration (Berry, 1997). In order to minimize the stress following relocation, Latinos and other minority immigrants must disregard their heritages to live comfortably in this city. Further research should compare the trend of acculturative choice among many different ethnic groups to fully understand the extent of the host society's cultural rigidity. Another pressure for Assimilation may stem from the fact that the city's political leaders and the locals are generally not prepared for the new surge of immigrants of different races and ethnic backgrounds; therefore, the need for complete immersion into the American society is necessary for survival, to avoid falling back academically or economically. Moreover, although the majority of Latinos in Boston may have been forced to choose Assimilation, further analyses of the current study indicate that this acculturative strategy may be the most successful with regards to psychological well-being. Overall, the unwelcoming climate of Boston gives evidence for the uniqueness of the pattern of acculturation among Latino immigrants, which differs from other locations of past research.

Interestingly, the second most frequent strategy of acculturation was Separation, the behavior of placing more value on the Latino culture than connecting with the new society. High levels of Separation may stem from the fact that the environment of Boston has historically been unwelcoming toward newcomers. With a culture of discrimination and racial polarization, the more recent wave of Latino immigrants may have been influenced to separate (Uriarte, 1992). The strategies of Assimilation and Separation differ extremely, and may be an artifact of the length of stay in Boston. Berry (1997) explains that individuals explore many of the acculturative strategies during their stay in the

new society, eventually choosing the one that is the most positive and comfortable. Although Berry briefly discusses the relationship between length of stay and acculturation in his work, the relationship between these two entities is understudied in general, and therefore our results are left inconclusive. The issue of length of stay in the city of Boston is a demographic question that would be informative of this particular strategy, and should be studied longitudinally as a field to assess its impact on acculturation in future research.

With regards to the question of well-being and self-esteem, the analyses of the current study support that Integrated individuals were not the most successful in terms of psychological adaptation. In fact, the pattern of means suggest that Integrated immigrants have significantly lower levels of vigor and satisfaction with life than Assimilated and Marginalized individuals, and significantly lower scores of positive affect than Marginalized individuals. Evidently within the context of Boston, contrary to Berry's hypothesis, Integration is not the most adaptive acculturative choice for immigrants, as it does not yield the highest levels of well-being and psychological adaptation across all measures (Berry, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2002).

Clearly the strategies of Assimilation and Marginalization provide the most advantageous psychological adaptations for Latino immigrants in Boston. A parallel between both acculturative strategies is the desertion of cultural, co-national ties. With regards to Assimilated individuals, fully interacting on a daily basis with the Boston society and breaking connections with the national culture (e.g., Spanish language, cultural values, activities, dress) may lead to more economic, social, and political success, and therefore to higher levels of well-being. Marginalized individuals, who typically keep to themselves while breaking ties with their native cultures as well as a connection with the host society, also have higher psychological well-being than those who conversely value a connection with the host society as well as with

their own Latino heritage. Perhaps Marginalized individuals gain a sense of freedom by not conforming to any specific culture; compared to individuals who are committed to two opposing societies, they are psychologically more successful.

Contrary to the majority of previous research, which has consistently linked Marginalization with negative outcomes, some past research gives support for the association between this acculturative strategy and positive psychological results, as seen in the results of this study. Previous research conducted by psychologists Cross and Fhagen-Smith (1996) argues that for some individuals, race and ethnicity are not a salient part of their identity or "worldview", and therefore are not connected with their well-being or personal adjustment (p. 111). These people may never go through racial identity development, and may base their sense of self on another domain instead (e.g., religion, occupation, gender). Although these individuals may be Marginalized from their racial or ethnic group, they may be associated with another group and have high levels of well-being. These findings defend the results of the current study, as many of the Marginalized Latinos in Boston perhaps did not consider their ethnic backgrounds as salient to their identities, but were bonded with another group. Because of this, Marginalized individuals continued to score high on the well-being scales, even in such an environment of apparent racial discrimination and rigidity. Another study by Rowley and Sellers (1998) also supports these findings, as they suggest that feelings of negativity towards one's racial or ethnic group are associated with low self-esteem only when race is a central part of one's identity. The Marginalized Latinos in Boston whose Latino identity did not define them would continue to reveal high levels of happiness, even after relocating to this unwelcoming environment.

Surprisingly, the results of the current study show no significant group differences with regards to self-esteem, both collective and global. The acculturation process may affect an

individual's self-esteem differently than their well-being, as the immigration process may affect one's happiness more directly than their self-worth. When relocating to a new society, well-being is affected by the extent of post-migration stressors such as sociocultural marginalization, perceived discrimination, and insufficient proficiency in the host country's language. Under these circumstances, an individual's feelings of self-worth as well as their evaluations of the worthiness of their racial group may not be altered, even though they are considered the minority group. Latino immigrants in Boston may have engaged in self-protection by attributing negative situations or happenings in the new city to external causes, such as the experience of immigration itself. Past research supports this idea, where students who had been insulted because of their race, nationality, religion, or residence, had equal levels of self-esteem with students who had not experienced such insults, when they attributed their discrimination to external, and not personal factors (Crocker & Major, 1989). In the context of Boston, Latino immigrants had similar levels of collective and global self-esteem, across all levels of acculturation, just as other minorities in other locations.

This study has several limitations that should be discussed. One accounts for the small number of participants in this experiment. Although a positive relationship had been established between the researcher and leaders of the organizations prior to recruitment, there were difficulties reaching the target number of participants, including cultural misunderstandings of survey methodologies and the overall meaning of the study. Although a citizen of Boston herself, the researcher faced cultural barriers to the Latino population, similar to those that immigrants may find themselves in their new environment. Future research should dedicate more time in conducting community-based fieldwork of this kind. Also to note is that the sample of participants that was selected for this study may have influenced the common acculturative strategies that were chosen.

Participants were chosen from culturally unified organizations situated in neighborhoods of Boston with the highest percentage of ethnic minorities, primarily Latinos. In their responses to the survey, they therefore may have been reluctant to reveal the true extent of their cultural pride, or their desire to connect with the host society, and thus chose one of the two extremes on the acculturative scale, Assimilation or Separation. To prevent such a divide, future research in this area should focus recruitment in other neighborhoods, with a different balance of racial groups.

Lastly, future research should examine immigrants' length of stay in the United States, as mentioned above. As Latinos have immigrated to Boston during different periods throughout the twentieth century, and for a variety of reasons, their experiences in the new context may differ greatly depending on the length of stay in the city. More time in this context may have enabled certain participants to adjust to one acculturative strategy over another, or have had an influence on their psychological adaptations. Future research should investigate the length of stay in this location, as it may be indicative to the patterns of acculturative strategies and self-esteem and well-being.

### Real-World Implications

Previous research has been conducted in California and the nations of France and Norway (Neto, 2002; Sam, 2000), among other locations, which are vastly different than the Boston area and New England in general. Future study should therefore focus on this Northeastern "city of immigrants" (Uriarte, 1992, p. 7) and the link between positive life outcomes and acculturative strategies for immigrants within this context. Because there has been a lack of study in the context of Boston, future research needs to investigate this population for the results of this study to become more conclusive. As the numbers of immigrants continue to grow, it is important to facilitate their process of relocation in order to encourage success in the new location and prevent any psychological distress. Within

the multicultural context of Boston, it is also important to discourage traditional attitudes of close-mindedness from persisting, especially when establishing public policies. The society today is one that should accept the increasing cultural mixture of its inhabitants in order to preserve harmony and promote the advancement of the city.

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Table 1

*Standardized Means and Standard Deviations for Co-National and Host-National Identity Subscales by Acculturative Strategy*

	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Marginalization
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Co-National	6.46 (.24)	3.07 (.34)	5.85 (.21)	2.69 (.42)
Host-National	5.38 (.65)	5 (.29)	2.83 (.31)	2.6 (.19)



Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Adaptation Subscales by Acculturative Strategy*

	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Marginalization	F-Statistic	Eta-Squared
Global Self-Esteem	2.43	1.99	1.96	1.5	0.84	0.129
Collective Self-Esteem	5.25	5.64	5.38	6.12	0.56	0.089
Satisfaction with Life	2.6(a)	5.73(b)	4.64(a)(b)	6.4(b)(c)	6.73*	0.543
Depression	2.06	1.42	2.09	1.4	3.14*	0.356
Vigor	2.42(a)	3.67(b)	3.02(a)(b)	3.88(b)(c)	5.79*	0.506
Positive Affect	2.16(a)	3.35(a)(b)	3.06(a)(b)	4.43(b)	3.24*	0.363
Negative Affect	2.13	1.58	1.61	1.27	1.78	0.239

Note: Means with different letters are significantly different from each other at  $p < .05$

\* =  $p$ -value  $< .05$